

OLSON NAMED NATIONAL TAXPAYER ADVOCATE

WASHINGTON – Nina E. Olson, the founder of the nation's first independent low-income taxpayer clinic, has been selected as the National Taxpayer Advocate, Internal Revenue Service Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti said today.

"Nina is a distinguished member of the tax community and has established a strong record as an advocate for taxpayer rights," Rossotti said. "I am confident she will give a powerful voice to taxpayers who have unresolved matters with the IRS."

For more than 20 years, beginning with the establishment of the Taxpayer Ombudsman Office in 1979, the IRS has provided Americans with a means for resolving problems with the agency. The Ombudsman Office was replaced by the Office of the Taxpayer Advocate in 1996; and in 1998, Congress renamed the Advocate the National Taxpayer Advocate and granted the office expanded authority to assist taxpayers.

The National Taxpayer Advocate is appointed by the Treasury Secretary following consultations with the IRS Commissioner and the IRS Oversight Board. The National Taxpayer Advocate -- an independent voice inside the IRS -- reports directly to the IRS Commissioner.

Olson will oversee a nationwide system of local taxpayer advocates ensuring that tax problems, which have not been resolved through normal channels, are promptly and fairly handled.

Before joining the IRS, Olson was a practicing attorney specializing in tax controversy work. She also founded and served as executive director of the Richmond, Virginia-based Community Tax Law project, the first independent 501(c)(3) low-income taxpayer clinic in the U.S.

Olson, a native of Philadelphia, earned a bachelor of arts degree from Bryn Mawr College, a juris doctor degree from North Carolina Central University School of Law and a master's of laws—taxation, from Georgetown University Law Center. She has been an adjunct professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, the College of William and Mary School of Law and the University of Richmond School of Law.

Olson will assume the duties of the office in early March 2001.

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